

## Colic

When your baby has long crying spells and seems to have a tummy ache



### Signs

- Baby cries a lot when he or she is not hungry, wet or lonesome.
- Baby cries or screams for two or more hours at a time.
- Crying happens about the same time of the day.
- Baby stiffens legs or pulls up his or her knees to the tummy and cries.



### What to Know

- Most often, colic develops within the first month and may continue until 3 to 4 months of age.
- Babies cry about 60 to 90 minutes a day during the first three weeks of life. The crying may increase to two to four hours/day by 6 weeks of age and gradually decrease by 3 months of age.
- No one knows the cause of colic, although some theories exist about an immature digestive system, food allergies, abdominal gas or sensitivity to a busy, noisy home.
- Colic occurs most often during the late afternoon and evening hours.
- Babies who suck quickly during bottle or breastfeeding can swallow large amounts of air that may cause colic-like signs.
- Occasionally, certain foods/beverages in a breastfeeding mother's diet may cause her baby to be fussy. Milk products,

nuts, eggs, chocolate, coffee, tea and caffeine may be the cause. You may want to limit these particular foods.

- Remember that it is not your fault if your baby has colic.



### What to Do

- **Never shake your baby!**
- Try to find out why your baby is crying. Check to see if baby is hungry; needs a diaper change; is too warm/cold, tired, scared, hurt, lonely, bored, etc.
- If you do not know why your baby is crying, then you may want to try different things to soothe your baby.
- No one method works every time. Use the method that works best for your baby.

### You can try:

- Feeding your baby slowly in an upright position and burping your baby at least once during and after the feeding.
- Not letting your baby go hungry, but not overfeeding.
- Offering a pacifier or a clean finger to suck on.
- Cuddling, swaddling or carrying your baby in your arms.
- Rocking your baby in your arms, cradle or infant swing.

*Continued on back page*

- Pushing your baby in a stroller or carriage.
- Taking your baby for a ride in the car using a car seat.
- Talking, singing or humming softly to your baby.
- Wrapping your baby in a blanket.
- Laying your baby on a warm blanket.
- Giving your baby a warm bath.
- When your baby is awake, laying your baby on his or her tummy and patting/rubbing baby's back.
- Massaging your baby. (Check for infant massage classes in your area.)
- Laying your baby down on his or her back for a nap.
- Darkening your baby's room at naptime.
- Allowing your baby time alone to settle and go to sleep.
- Keeping the noise level and stimulation down if baby is upset.
- Taking care of yourself and resting.
- Taking naps when the baby is napping.
- Trying to relax so your baby does not feel your stress.
- Calling a friend or relative for support.
- Giving yourself a break and having someone else watch your baby.
- Talking with your health care provider.
- Changing formula may be necessary. Check with your health care provider.

Remember, **never shake your baby!**



## When to Call Your Health Care Provider

- Your baby's cry becomes a painful cry rather than a fussy cry.
- If baby cries constantly for more than two hours.
- If your baby vomits more than three times in 12 hours.
- If your baby shows signs of dehydration:
  - Four or fewer wet diapers in 24 hours
  - Dry mouth
  - Sunken eyes
  - Sunken soft spot on head (fontanel)
  - Extreme irritability
  - Listlessness (decreased activity)
  - Possibly no tears
- If your baby has diarrhea or loose stools:
  - More than one per hour
  - Blood in stool
  - Signs of dehydration
- If your baby has a fever.
  - Axillary [armpit] 98.6° F (37.0° C) or higher
  - Rectally 100.4° F (38.0° C) or higher
- If you are afraid you might hurt your baby.
- If you can't find a way to soothe your baby.
- If you or someone else has shaken your baby.

